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PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #4110/01 3071121
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7823
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 004110

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/01/2016
TAGS: [IZ](#) [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: TURKISH EMBASSY IN BAGHDAD INACTIVE ON PKK,
MAKHMOUR CAMP

REF: A. BAGHDAD 3939

[1](#)B. BAGHDAD 3807

Classified By: Polcouns Margaret Scobey, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Poloffs informed Turkish Embassy in Baghdad DCM Yazal about the recent meeting that UNHCR held with the GOI and the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) regarding the future of the Makhmour refugee camp; Yazal was unaware of the meeting. Poloffs encouraged the GOT to engage with the GOI and UNHCR to further the trilateral anti-PKK process and discuss the draft Tripartite Agreement to facilitate the return of Turkish Kurd refugees. Yazal said the GOT still has not met with the GOI's anti-PKK coordinator, but may do so during a planned November 16 visit by PM Maliki to Turkey. He insisted on the need to restore the civilian character of the camp as key to overall progress in addressing the issue. The Turkish Embassy here currently appears unlikely to take an active role in either the trilateral anti-PKK process or in Makhmour. End Summary.

Still No GOI/GOT PKK Meeting

[1](#)2. (C) Deputy PolCouns and Embassy RefCoord met with Turkish Embassy DCM Ahmet Yazal on November 1. Yazal said the Turkish Embassy still has not met with State Minister for National Security Wa'ili, the GOI's representative to the trilateral anti-PKK process, because it has not received instructions to do so. However, Yazal said PM Maliki will visit Turkey November 16 and Wa'ili may accompany him. Yazal said the GOT would not meet with Karim Sinjari, the KRG representative to the process, due to "sensitivities about where he comes from."

[1](#)3. (C) Deputy PolCouns strongly urged the Turkish Embassy to establish a working relationship with Wa'ili as soon as possible, and pointed out that the GOT had met many times with KDP representatives over the years. Yazal replied that domestic sensitivities were high in Turkey and the GOT has in the past had "bitter experiences" with the GOI on PKK issues. The DCM claimed only one PKK office in Iraq had been closed; Deputy PolCouns said our information indicates otherwise, and for precisely this reason the GOT should move on appointing an LNO to accompany MNF-I to verify PKK office closures.

Restoring Makhmour's Civilian Character is Key

[1](#)4. (C) RefCoord raised the subject of UNHCR and U.S. efforts to find a durable solution for the estimated 15,000 Turkish Kurd refugees in northern Iraq -- particularly the 11,000 at the PKK-infiltrated Makhmour refugee camp -- and to encourage the GOT to meet with UNHCR and the GOI to finalize the draft voluntary repatriation Tripartite Agreement. Yazal

reiterated the GOT position that the GOI must prove its willingness to expel the PKK from Makhmour in order to advance on the Tripartite. He did not know that the GOI, the KRG and UNHCR had met on October 17 for an initial look at UNHCR's plan to expel the PKK from Makhmour (reftel A), but insisted that the GOT expected President Talabani to respond to High Commissioner for Refugees Guterres' June 1 letter as a tangible sign of the GOI's commitment to the plan.

15. (C) RefCoord noted that he and an MNF-I representative attended the October 17 meeting, and that we considered it a positive first step in the GOI's evolving commitment to expel the PKK from Makhmour. RefCoord emphasized the significance of the meeting over a formal response to Guterres' letter, and encouraged the GOT to think about finalizing the Tripartite Agreement and expelling the PKK from Makhmour as two different processes that should move in parallel but not necessarily simultaneously.

No Commitment to Meet with the GOI in Geneva

16. (C) Yazal stated that the GOT would likely agree to meet with UNHCR and the U.S. in Geneva to further discuss the Tripartite, but did not indicate whether the GOT would also meet with the GOI, stating that this was a decision for Ankara to make. He maintained that expelling the PKK from the camp was more important than reaching an agreement on the Tripartite, and implied that Ankara needed a document (i.e., a response from Talabani to Guterres) for Turkish domestic public opinion reasons.

Turkish Embassy Unlikely to be Active

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17. (C) Comment: The Turkish Embassy here is clearly disinclined to be proactive -- or even active -- on either the trilateral anti-PKK process or Makhmour. The meeting was useful in letting the GOT know about the October 17 meeting and to encourage the GOT to engage the GOI on refugee issues. However, the DCM reiterated familiar GOT positions on the trilateral process and Makhmour, and seemed unconvinced that the October 17 meeting by itself would move Ankara to engage the GOI. The DCM was interested, however, on learning more about the GOI and KRG's follow-up to the October 17 meeting. End comment.
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